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RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RHFJSCC/COMMARFORPAC  
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 003445

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [ECON](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: EARLIER ELECTION POSSIBLE; DIMINISHED THREAT FROM  
DEMONSTRATORS

Classified By: Political Counselor Susan M. Sutton, reason 1.4 (b) and  
(d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Momentum is building for elections to be held November 25, about a month earlier than previously announced. The promise of earlier elections could help blunt calls for the interim government and junta to step down. Members of the dissolved Thai Rak Thai party are waiting for the legislature to approve the procedures for new parties to register. The legislature is proceeding at a deliberate pace on this issue. It is generally held in Bangkok that the ongoing pro-Thaksin/anti-coup demonstrations are a bust. Nonetheless, the protesters plan to rally again on Saturday; the threat of bad weather again may contribute to lower-than-hoped-for turnout, unless some scandal or provocation reinvigorates the demonstrations. END SUMMARY.

ELECTION DATE MAY ADVANCE  
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12. (C) Prime Minister Surayut Chulanont continues to advocate for elections to be held earlier than then the December 26 deadline previously proposed by the government. Surayud and election officials said publicly that the elections could be moved up to November 25, if the new charter is approved in the August 19 referendum. This is a smart move on several counts. It further supports the government's argument that protests to evict them are unnecessary as they are on the way out anyway. It creates an additional incentive, for those who want the return of normal elected government, to vote for the constitution. A shorter election campaign may make it little tougher for the new parties that eventually arise from the ashes of Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai (TRT) to compete against more established parties, which share the anti-Thaksin orientation of the government/Council for National Security (CNS).

AND SPEAKING OF THE ASHES OF TRT  
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13. (C) The National Legislative Assembly (NLA) on June 20 agreed in principle to rescind the ban on registration of new political parties, but it also voted to deliberate the bill under normal parliamentary procedures. The PM had suggested that the NLA could adopt the bill in an expedited manner, by holding the three required readings in one day. The NLA established a 15-member panel to study the bill for one week.

According to an NGO contact, TRT members are threatening to campaign against the constitution if they are not allowed to register new parties by the time of the referendum in mid-August. Given the NLA vote yesterday, it does not appear that it will take that long to resolve this issue, but the NLA has proven to be unpredictable.

AND SPEAKING OF UNPREDICTABLE -- WEATHER AND THAKSIN  
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14. (C) How many Thaksin supporters will turn out on Saturday for the march on Army Headquarters? The Democratic Alliance Against Dictatorship (DAAD) is still planning to rally junta opponents and Thaksin supporters on Saturday at noon, to try to stage the protest march that was rained out last week. Unfortunately for them, rainy season is here, and the weather looks to be stormy again during the weekend. This is likely to discourage potential supporters from attending; in any case, the organizers do not appear to be able to muster an impressive crowd of supporters. The general view in Bangkok is that the protests have fizzled out, unless something happens to reinvigorate the demonstrators.

15. (C) At this point, there are no obvious flashpoints for the rest of the month. The Constitutional Drafting Assembly (CDA) continues to debate revisions to the draft constitution. About a dozen monks are on hunger strike in front of their meeting place, calling for the inclusion of Buddhism as the state religion in the new charter. Debate on this issue, which is potentially contentious, has been delayed, but is likely to take place about June 27 or 28. Monks at the demonstration site told us today that they

BANGKOK 00003445 002 OF 002

expected to have "thousands of demonstrators" out to join them during the debate. Several of the fasting monks were taken to the hospital last week, they have returned to protest site and resumed fasting. While the death or serious illness of one of these monks would be a cause of dismay, there is no indication that anything happening at this site could feed into the DAAD protest.

16. (C) Former PM Thaksin is also giving no sign of returning to face the accumulating charges against him. The prosecutors on June 20 filed corruption charges against Thaksin and his wife over a controversial land deal. The Supreme Court will decide by July 10 whether to accept the case or not. The Assets Examination Commission, meanwhile, announced they will freeze additional assets found in six more bank accounts. In England, according to press reports, Thaksin pursued his plans to go through with the purchase of the Manchester City Soccer Team with an announced bid of about usdols 160 million.

BOYCE